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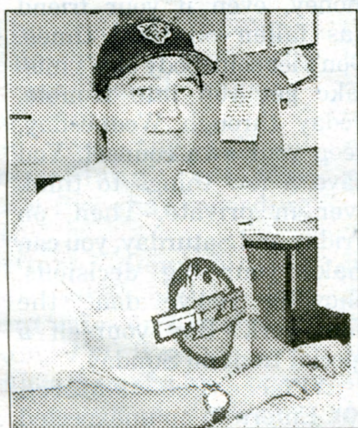
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Tuesday, February 1, 2000

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Warner proves dreams can come true



From the Sports Desk
Matt Coss

Six years ago ex-UNI quarterback Kurt Warner was stocking shelves in Aisle 5 of the bakery supplies at the Cedar Falls Hy-

Vee after being cut by the Green Bay Packers.

On Sunday night, Warner reached the top shelf.

The 1993 UNI graduate capped off an improbable and fairy tale football season by leading the St. Louis Rams to a hard-fought 23-16 victory over the gritty Tennessee Titans in Super Bowl XXXIV.

"Kurt Warner is Kurt Warner," St. Louis coach Dick Vermeil said. "It's not a fairy tale. It's real life. He's an example of what we'd all like to be on and off the field."

Warner, this year's National Football League's

Most Valuable Player, threw for a Super Bowl record 414 yards on 24-of-46 passing and was named the Super Bowl's MVP.

It is the first time in league history that someone has been named the regular season and Super Bowl MVP in the same season.

Besides throwing for more than 5,000 yards and 49 touchdowns in 19 games this season, Warner verified anything is possible by believing in oneself, despite the amount of adversity one might have to encounter along the way.

"Don't ever lose sight of it. Don't let anyone say you

can't do something. I believe in the Lord, and I believe in myself. With that, you can accomplish anything," Warner said after Sunday's victory.

Warner came out firing as he led the Rams into the redzone on all five first half possessions. His first six completions found six different sets of hands, including tackle Fred Miller, who gathered in a tipped ball.

However, life inside the opponents 20 wasn't too friendly for Warner and company. In the first half alone, Warner was 0-for-11 passing once the Rams reached the Titans' 20-yard line. Warner, who threw a

Super Bowl record 35 passes in the first half, was 19-of-24 outside the redzone.

"We just weren't finishing some things," Warner said. "They did a good job getting some pressure."

On the opening drive of the second half, Warner completed 4-of-5 passes for 65 yards, resulting in a touchdown to Torry Holt at the 7:20 mark of the third quarter.

That completion would be Warner's last until his final heave with 1:54 remaining. With the score tied at 16 and the Titans having the momentum,

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Rams edge Titans by one yard

BY MATT COSS
NI SPORTS EDITOR

The first half of Sunday's Super Bowl between St. Louis and Tennessee seemed to be pretty much one-sided.

The Rams had piled up 294 yards of total offense, while the Titans had 89. St. Louis had five first-half possessions and five trips inside the redzone. However, Dick Vermeil's squad only had nine points to show for it.

Meanwhile, the second half showcased the game many had come to expect. Tennessee came out the aggressors in the second-half with Eddie George carrying the football 20 times for 78 yards. George's second touchdown and a Titan field-goal tied the game at 16 with 2:12 remaining.

The last two-minutes brought about drama from both team's offense. Kurt Warner's 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce put the Rams in front, 23-16.

However, the Titans marched down to the Rams' 10-yard line with 0:06 left. With one final play, Titans quarterback Steve McNair found Kevin Dyson across the middle. St. Louis linebacker Mike Jones came from behind to make the stop, and leave the Titans one-yard short of the goal line as time expired.

Super Bowl XXXIV was only the third championship game decided by seven points or less since 1990.

Beside Denver's seven-point victory over Green Bay in 1998, the New York Giants 20-19 nailbiter over the Buffalo Bills was the last in 1991.

Amanda Arbuckle / NI Photo Editor



UNI's Paul Hynek got the Panthers out to a solid start in Saturday's dual encounter with Nebraska. Hynek pinned Matt Zutavem in the middle of the second period. Hynek was the only Panther to record a pin in UNI's five victories.

Wrestlers almost pull off sweep

■ Manning's squad destroys UNO before tying No. 7 Nebraska

BY KEVIN KUKER
NI SPORTS WRITER

The UNI Panther wrestling squad had a very productive weekend with a commanding meet win as well as a tie in another meet.

With eight of ten wrestlers winning matches, the Panthers crushed Nebraska-Omaha, 33-6, in Omaha Friday.

They took that momentum into Saturday's meet against Big 12 powerhouse Nebraska and came away with a 20-20 tie.

The Panthers, ranked

ninth nationally, won five matches against the Cornhuskers, who came in ranked seventh in the country.

"I'm proud of the way our guys performed," coach Mark Manning said. "They gave it all they had out there this weekend."

Nebraska-Omaha

Against Nebraska-Omaha, heavyweight Paul Hynek, Nate Lawrenz at 165-pounds, Chad Boudreaux at 133-pounds and Eric Dunmire at 125-pounds all won by decision.

Kyle Hansen, at 184-pounds, was a major decision winner over Desmond Wilford, 12-2.

Tony Davis, back in the

line-up after suffering a pulled hamstring, won his match against Clay Stark by a technical fall at 149-pounds.

UNI also recorded two pins by way of Nick Flach at 141-pounds in 6:41 and Randy Pugh at 174-pounds in 2:28.

The two losses that UNI suffered were very closely contested, however. Alan Cartwright of Nebraska-Omaha beat Bob Koenig, 9-5, at 157-pounds and Tony Wieland lost a 7-5 overtime decision to Chad Wallace.

Nebraska

Winning for the Panthers in Lincoln Saturday included Flach, Lawrenz and Pugh all by

decision.

Hynek pinned Cornhusker wrestler Mat Zutavem in 4:00. Davis had a technical fall over Joe Henson by a score of 20-5 in 5:52.

Nebraska head coach Tim Neumann knew that a battle was going to take place before any wrestler stepped onto the mat.

"I thought it was going to be a war and that's what it was," Neumann said. "I thought to win tonight [Saturday] we were going to need to steal a match at either 141-pounds or 165-pounds and we didn't get either of them."

Neumann also witnessed both squads show-

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UNI's victory bid at ISU falls short

■ **Cagers finish 4-5 at halfway point of tightly-contested Valley race**

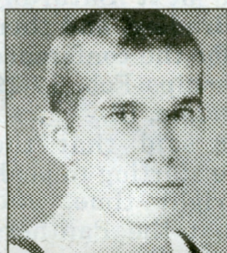
BY BRENT HARDIN
NI ASSOCIATE SPORTS
EDITOR

Two weeks ago, the UNI men's basketball team pulled out a last-second victory against Illinois State, as junior Robbie Sieverding hit a game-winning shot to give UNI the victory, 58-56.

Unfortunately, Sieverding and the Panthers couldn't duplicate the feat on the road.

Illinois State used clutch free-throw shooting down the stretch to beat UNI, 60-56, and earned its second conference victory.

UNI, which had several leads during the ballgame, saw its overall record drop to 11-8, and its MVC mark fell to 4-5.



Robbie Sieverding

Sieverding led UNI with 17 points and four assists, while senior Cory Jenkins tossed in 14 points, six rebounds and one block in 39 minutes of action.

Junior Joe Breakenridge led the Panthers with seven rebounds, and junior Kelvin Hill had six points and two steals to aid UNI's cause.

However, the Redbirds

had three players in double-figures, won the rebounding war by one, 28-27, and went 27-of-34 at the free-throw line, with 24 of those chances coming in the second half.

Junior Tarise Bryson led Illinois State with 20 points, as he went 6-12 from the field and 4-9 from behind the three-point line. Sophomore Shawn Jeppson finished with 15 points, and senior Ryan Crowley contributed 10 points.

The Redbirds pulled out the victory despite playing without senior center L. Dee Murdock, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during the first meeting against UNI on Jan. 15. Murdock had been ISU's second-leading scorer and top rebounder, and had been second in the conference in rebounding.

The lead changed hands many times during the game, as neither team could quite pull away during the contest. The Panthers had a 17-10 lead with eight minutes remaining in the first-half, but the Redbirds cut the lead to 28-26 at halftime.

The second half was a seesaw battle, as the teams traded scores for most of the half. However, the Redbirds grabbed the lead with two minutes remaining and never let go, taking home the four point win.

UNI will come home for a MVC battle with Southern Illinois Thursday night at 7:05 before traveling to Bradley next Saturday.

St. Louis quarterback hopes to influence others

Continued from page 14

Warner made his last pass of a remarkable season one to remember for the ages.

As Warner was being hit by Jeavon Kearse ("The Freak"), the second-year NFL quarterback heaved it down field to hit Isaac Bruce for a 73-yard touchdown strike in what turned out to be the game-winner for the Rams.

"It was just a play, a 'go' route, we had called it a little bit earlier," Warner said. "They had told me that Isaac had beaten his guy over there, so we wanted to take a chance and see if we could get it downfield, get a big one right off the bat. Isaac went up and made a great play and a great run after the



Kurt Warner

catch."

With the season all but history, how will Warner be remembered for one of the greatest seasons in NFL history?

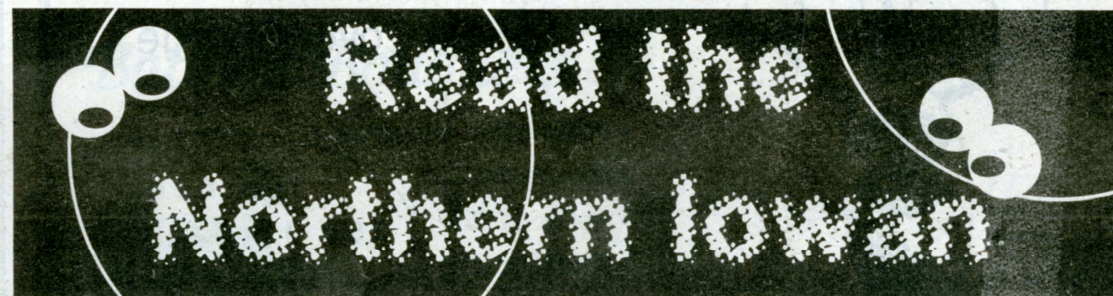
"As I've always said, if it could be a source of hope to anybody out there, then I'm happy to be a part of it," Warner said after Sunday's game. "But when it's your

life, you just take it day by day and you take what the good Lord gives you and you use it in the best way you can."

The expectations for Warner and the St. Louis Rams next season will be quite high by bringing back the second youngest team in the NFL.

As for Warner, there wasn't a doubt in his mind that he couldn't reach this plateau. However, I don't think a Super Bowl ring was on his mind in Aisle 5 of the supermarket in 1994.

The question many of us are eager to have answered for next year is: Will Kurt Warner's expiration date expire and force him to come off the top shelf or will he stay fresh?



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